three years (for which figures are available for the value of losses) due to pests, diseases and rodents, etc.;

(b) how much of this loss was shared by the farmers, Government and the insurance companies in each State; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to improve the situation in this regard and with what results?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) There is no mechanism to account for the loss of foodgrains in value due to pests, diseases and rodents etc., as also to assess the share of this loss by farmers, Government and insurance agencies in the country.

(c) The public agencies have been able to minimise the losses by adopting scientific methods of storage practices covering improved godowns, prophylactic and curative treatments of the stored produce, use of dunnage, periodical inspection, aeration etc.

The Department of Food have launched a country-wide Save Grain Campaign for educating, motivating and pursuading the farmers to adopt scientific storage practices. It has been noticed that losses are significantly lower, wherever farmers adopt the recommended practices.

Bisra Stone Mines at Birmitrapur, Orissa

2198. SHRI GANESHWAR KUSUM: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the plight of the workers of M/s. Bisra lime stone mines Birmitrapur in Orissa;

(b) if so, what are the steps taken to take over the mines and save the workers from possible retrenchment; and

(c) what are the details of the steps taken to remove the financial crisis of that lime stone mines?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government are exploring the possibilities of stepping up sales from the mines in order to enable production to be increased to improve the financial viability of the Company. No retrenchment is contemplated.

Soil conservation measures in Orissa

2199. SHRI GANESHWAR KUSUM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether soil conservation measures have been taken up by Government in the inter-State river valley areas of Orissa;

(b) if so, what are the details of the soil conservation measures during the last three years; and

(c) how much amount has been spent on the soil conservation measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Yes, Sir. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of "Soil Conservation in the catchments of River Valley Projects (RVP)" is being implemented in inter-State River Valley areas of Hirakud, Machkund/Sileru and Rangali-Mandira catchments in Orissa.

(b) and (c) Soil conservation measures implemented under this scheme consist of contour/graded bunding, levelling/terracing, gully control works, planting of utility trees on arable lands, besides afforestation and pasture development undertaken on